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Valley Cities selects new site for recovery, treatment and detox services

The Recovery Centers of King County building will offer partial services originally slated for the Woodmont Recovery Center in Des Moines

Kent, WA – Valley Cities acquired the former Recovery Centers of King County building in Kent. This facility will provide a portion of the essential mental health and substance abuse treatment programs that were slated to be delivered as part of a campus of integrated services called Woodmont Recovery Center in Des Moines. Plans for the comprehensive campus have been postponed.

Valley Cities agreed to work with city, county and state officials to research alternate sites following a public outcry in the Des Moines community regarding the proximity to an elementary school and library.

“We listened to the community’s concerns about the Woodmont site and explored other options,” says Ken Taylor, Valley Cities CEO. “We know that we’re good neighbors and have a positive impact on the communities we serve. But unfortunately, that’s not enough to overcome the stigma facing our clients. We were lucky to find something that will meet some of the specific needs of people living with mental illness, but this is a very partial solution.” In addition, this site is ideally located in close proximity to the Valley Cities offices in downtown Kent that houses the agency’s administrative offices and provides outpatient counseling services. Valley Cities is proud to have served the people of Kent for almost 50 years and looks forward to continuing a cooperative relationship with the Kent community for many years to come.

King County has only 201 involuntary treatment beds. People from South King County must travel long distances to access services in downtown Seattle, Kirkland, or Burien.

The Kent facility, at 505 Washington Avenue South, is within easy access to I-5 and located in the South King County area. Valley Cities purchased the site for \$1 million and will operate mental health evaluation and treatment services out of the facility. There will be 32 beds available to address a serious shortfall in residential services for people in mental health crisis.

Previously operating as the Recovery Centers of King County, the facility provided intensive inpatient detoxification services for low-income individuals for more than 32 years but ceased delivering services earlier this year due to lack of funding. The facility has the proper permitting and zoning to operate as a mental health treatment facility but requires an estimated \$7 million in improvements to meet the state’s licensure and certification requirements. Valley Cities is currently working with the State of Washington, notably, Speaker of the House Frank Chopp, Senator Karen Keiser, and Representative Tina Orwall on an approval to move the \$5 million awarded for Woodmont improvements to finance updates to the Kent facility.

“We will continue to work together to address the stigma against people with mental illness or substance abuse problems so that community based treatment will be accessible to all communities,” says Senator Karen Keiser.

The site only recently became available and, at only 13,481 square feet, is not a viable option for Valley Cities’ full “campus” design that would place all components of mental health and substance abuse treatment and recovery in close proximity. The Woodmont Recovery Center plans included an evaluation and treatment facility, a secure detoxification unit, a Recovery Café and an outpatient services building. This integrated system of care would have provided fewer barriers to a person seeking help for mental health and substance use issues as well as primary care. For now, the Woodmont site is still under consideration for facilities including outpatient behavioral health counseling, primary medical and dental care, and agency administration offices. The City of Des Moines conditional use permit for the site remains valid for five years.

“We appreciate the folks at Valley Cities being cooperative and listening to the concerns of the community,” says Des Moines Mayor Dave Kaplan. “There is no question that these services are necessary to get people the help they need to reclaim their lives. The Kent facility only scratches the surface of the need for available mental health treatment and care facilities not only here in South King County but across the State of Washington.”

Improvements to the Kent facility will start early January 2016 with plans for the site to be operational by the end of the year.

About Valley Cities

Valley Cities, a nonprofit agency, has provided treatment services to residents of King County, primarily South King County, for over 50 years. Over 7,500 people were served in 2014. Services include licensed mental health counseling and chemical dependency treatment for people of all ages; domestic violence services; homeless outreach services and housing programs; family support programs; employment services; and specialized services for veterans and their families. Valley Cities is a long-time provider of services and supports under contract with King County and is a United Way partner agency.

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